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UNCLAS MAPUTO 000675

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR AF/S AND INL/AAE

PRETORIA FOR SSNYDER

DOJ FOR ICITAP EBEINHART AND OPDAT JSILVERWOOD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KCRM](#) [KCOR](#) [KJUS](#) [ASEC](#) [MZ](#)

SUBJECT: ANIBALZINHO ESCAPES AGAIN, GRM EMBARRASSED

REF: MAPUTO 636

11. (U) On May 9, Anibal dos Santos Junior once again escaped from maximum security prison, creating a highly embarrassing situation for the GRM. "Anibalzinho" was serving the 28-year sentence he received in absentia in January 2003 for his central role in the November 2000 murder of journalist Carlos Cardoso. He had previously escaped in August 2002 and was apprehended in South Africa the day before his sentence was handed down. As with his previous escape, many commentators speculate that he was allowed to escape because he could reveal information damaging to government officials.

12. (SBU) The public has reacted the escape with disgust, disappointment, and derision. Schoolchildren have even taken to playing a game in which one child, playing "Anibazinho," is allowed to walk out the open door. The influential weekly "Savana" has encouraged government ministers to accept responsibility and resign. Some commentators have pointed to the escape as proof that crime syndicates control the government. Those with a weakness for conspiracy theories are certain that this time dos Santos was killed to prevent any revelations that could bring down powerful people.

13. (U) President Chissano has announced that recapture of the escaped prisoner is "essential and imperative," because "it would help the authorities to clarify a number of other criminal cases that he knows." Three officers from the prison have been detained as suspects for facilitating his escape. The Attorney General's Office was questioning others in the prison who were convicted along with dos Santos for the Cardoso murder in additional follow-up investigations on related charges. These investigations also allegedly involved the BCM bank fraud. One of those being questioned, Nini Satar, is a key defendant in the BCM trail and claims that he called Anti-Corruption Unit Chief Isabel Rupia on May 4 to warn her that Anibalzinho was going to escape.

14. (SBU) On May 18, Ambassador and USAID Director attended a government event which featured numerous speakers, including President Chissano and the Minister of Justice. Speaking on behalf of the G-15 donors group, the Swiss Cooperation Director delivered a strong criticism of the GRM legal reform effort. He described results to date as unsatisfactory and expressed shock at the escape, describing it as a serious blow to the credibility of the government's reform. He referred to the recent joint review exercise and the finding that the delays in investigation and resolution of serious cases such as these financial crimes, along with the unresolved murders such as the Siba-Siba case, leave a strong impression of impunity.

LA LIME